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REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS.

LES ARTISTES CÉLÈBRES. PHIDIAS, par MAXIME COLLIGNON, Professeur suppléant à la Faculté des Lettres de Paris. Ouvrage accompagné de 45 gravures. 4to, pp. 128. Paris, 1886, Librairie de l'Art. J. Rouam, éditeur, 29 Cité d'Antin.

Every new book about Pheidias brings out anew two facts: how small our actual knowledge of him is, and how general the temptation to refer to him all that there is to say of the art of his generation. A marked quality of M. Collignon's book is its moderation in this respect. The author is very careful of dogmatism and over-statement, and watchful of the boundary between knowledge and conjecture. There are few subjects in which this care is more necessary. Pheidias is such a magnificent figure in the history of art, the things we know of him are so definite, our impression of them so precise and clear, the things that may have been true of him so obvious and enticing, the contrast between the positiveness of what we see and the dimness of what we do not see so disconcerting, that there is great temptation to fill up the whole picture with positive color and form. Here M. Collignon's reserve is excellent. He has given a good account of what is known about Pheidias, taking advantage of all the recognized authorities, and having due regard to others who have written on his subject before him. His interest in Pheidias has not led him to forget where conjecture begins, and the reader, whether disposed or not to go with him in all his inferences, does not lose confidence in the writer's accuracy and judgment.

In selection and arrangement the book is excellent, the salient points well marked, and the parts proportioned with that judgment which is a Frenchman's birthright. Without needless display of erudition it is brought up to the scholarship of its date, and is provided with an adequate bibliography and justificatory notes; so that while it is intended for general readers, like the rest of M. Rouam's series of *Artistes Célèbres*, to which it belongs, it is a book which the scholar reads with pleasure, and which shows the student the way to further research in its subject.

But what we know of Pheidias is not enough to make a book, and hence the salutary necessity, to which every writer on him yields, of including

with it the whole range of sculpture of the time and place in which he lived. This may be done in the biographer's spirit, on the assumption that all we have is Pheidias's, or we may discuss the whole sculpture of the Parthenon as the achievement of the age of Perikles, in which Pheidias is the foremost artistic figure. M. Collignon takes the more moderate view, and, while he sees in Pheidias the leading figure and probably the dominant force in Perikleian art, he does not make him absorb all the greatness of the great epoch of Athenian sculpture. All writers from Plutarch and Pausanias down have been so pre-occupied with the brilliance of Pheidias's fame, that one feels a strong desire to plead for the unknown great sculptors who must clearly have been his co-workers, and to complain that Perikleian Athens is belittled when it is assumed that she could furnish but one who was a master in the art. Perhaps even M. Collignon goes further in his attribution than the evidence requires, though not beyond the limit of reasonable conjecture. In discussing the sculptures of the pediments he says discreetly (pp. 63-4): "Deux caractères nous frappent surtout: la parfaite unité des deux compositions, et des différences assez notables dans l'exécution des statues. Considérez les deux frontons: vous y reconnaîtrez le même esprit, dans le groupement des figures, dans le mouvement des draperies, qui accuse un sentiment tout nouveau et une réaction marquée contre la timidité des anciennes écoles. Et cependant le style des figures est loin d'être uniforme: ici une facture plus large et plus sommaire, comme dans l'Héraclès; ailleurs, des délicatesses charmantes, comme dans le Céphise; quelquefois, comme dans l'Iris, un modelé moins souple et moins gras. Que des mains différentes aient travaillé à ces statues, on n'en saurait douter; mais quoi de plus naturel, si l'on attribue à Phidias seul la conception des deux frontons? C'est là en effet la solution à laquelle nous nous arrêterons. Nous imaginons volontiers Phidias déterminant le plan des frontons (M. Collignon means the composition of their sculpture) exécutant de sa main les modèles en terre, et distribuant entre les sculpteurs de son atelier la tâche beaucoup plus longue de les rendre en marbre. Nous irons même plus loin, et nous reconnaitrons la main et le coup de ciseau du maître dans les morceaux de maîtrise, tels que le groupe de Déméter et Coré, celui des Kharites, et le Céphise." This is very reasonable, and only suggests the caveat, on the one hand, that the same artist, if only he be skilful enough, may very well in a large and varied composition handle some figures with boldness and others with delicacy, according to their intended character and expression; and, on the other, that the "coup de ciseau" of Pheidias is perhaps that one of his technical qualities of which we have the least information.

In point of fact, the discussion of Pheidian art is much more complex than if it covered only the work or the influence of one man. The trans-

itional phase through which sculpture was passing was very like that which overtook ecclesiastical art, especially architecture, in Western Europe at the end of the twelfth century. We have not only to account with archaicism, conventionalism, a growing realism, an awakening artistic freedom; but to recognise the mingling of the bolder and simpler but more rigid Doric sculpture with the freer and more graceful Ionic, itself a complex of Greek and Oriental influences. To these are to be added the personal impulse and the actual performance of an exceptionally great master who, as we have evidence, overtopped all about him, and apparently both by his genius and his position exercised a masterful sway over those who worked with him, or at least carried off all the public applause which has come down to our time. Students and writers may naturally differ as to the part they ascribe to this exceptional master, the minuteness with which they trace his influence, and the limits they assign to his work. But where all is inference or conjecture a convincing deduction is not possible. The equations are too few for the unknown quantities. On these questions M. Collignon seems to take the most reasonable ground, ascribing to Pheidias the planning of the iconography of the Parthenon throughout, and to other hands the execution of all but the most important parts.

The chief characteristics of what one may call the Pheidian sculpture have come to be well recognized, and M. Collignon brings them out with clearness and insight. But I doubt if they are marked by a quality which is often ascribed to them, and which he mentions with some emphasis. Speaking of Pheidias's work, M. Collignon says: "Tout y est si simple et si grand, que cette perfection semble n'avoir coûté aucun effort." And again: "Seul il a possédé le secret de cette majestueuse simplicité, de cette grâce puissante et fière, de cette noblesse divine, qui donnent aux statues du Parthénon leur beauté radieuse, et leur éternelle jeunesse." Grand, noble, serene,—by turns majestic and graceful, and sometimes both,—such the sculpture of the Parthenon certainly is, and full of an unstrained masterly freedom apparently unattained till their time: but unity, breadth, singleness of effect, rather than simplicity, are their qualities—qualities which in the hands of a master give the impression of simplicity to work which is composed of multifarious elements. Only in the works of nature and of the greatest masters do we see the power to control a multitude of factors without constraint into an organized whole, and to turn complexity into transparent unity. When this rare mastery exists, to fail to recognize it is perhaps to omit the master's highest praise; and we are the more in danger of overlooking it in an age which is so enamored of slowness and sketchiness in works of art that it is losing its perception of the highest powers of composition. The composition of the pediments of the Parthe-

non is surely far from simple, and in the frieze one of the most conspicuous qualities is a marvellous facility in the handling of intricate combinations. To display the difference between real simplicity and the singleness of a masterful but complex composition we need only compare the Parthenon frieze with Flaxman's or Thorwaldsen's classical inventions. Nothing better shows the inferiority in power of the modern artists than to look at them in this light. Even in matters of detail the same thing holds. The draping of the single figures in the Parthenon pediments is more complicated than in earlier work. It is the wonderfully skilful combination of its lines that gives the figures and groups their effect of unity in spite of a multitudinous detail. Indeed, if I dared suggest a shadow of criticism of the sculpture of the Parthenon, it would be that the draperies in the pediments, in spite of their magnificent composition, and probably in the interest of the awakened naturalism of the time, were a little over-complicated; and that in parts of the frieze the gathering of horses' legs suggests the aptness of the popular sarcasm on Correggio's cupola at Parma. If we read Pliny's and Pausanias's accounts of the Parthenon and the Olympian Zeus, we must realize that elaborateness of composition could hardly be carried farther than in them; and, however we may feel assured that the genius of Pheidias could turn all this varied splendor to singleness of result, the descriptions show that the most luxurious inventions of Cellini would have been simple beside these.

Indeed there is encouragement to think that the greatest technical contribution to Greek sculpture of the age of Pheidias, very likely his own contribution, was just this splendid mastery of composition. In the Olympian and Aiginetan friezes we miss it. The figures stand well enough together, but as if they had been made apart—bought in different shops, and set together with sense and judgment. The pliancy, the freedom and yet sensitiveness to each other's neighborhood and to the prevailing unity which mark every figure and every detail of the Parthenon sculpture are wanting. The mastery of composition is not there. In Pheidias's time it is present. What a careful comparative study of the sculpture of the almost contemporaneous Theseion would suggest as to the order of its development, I do not know; but once acquired it is a permanent possession, and we see it in varying degrees through all the later phases of Greek and even Roman art. The Phigaleian frieze, the sculptures of Pergamon and Halikarnassos, the marriage-frieze at Munich, exemplify it; and it was perhaps that quality which the Romans best maintained in their sculpture, as we see in their sarcophagi and in its late decline in the reliefs of Trajan's column and the Triumphal arches. Pheidias had, and may have been the first to acquire, that power of combination, that exuberant fertility which distinguish Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese and Rubens among painters.

How he was possessed by the decorative instinct that belonged to the Ionic Greeks we may infer from the fact that his greatest works—at least the most conspicuous and most popular—were the chryselephantine colossi, in which the sumptuousness of his imagination found its extreme expression.

These qualities indeed are pictorial, qualities which belong primarily to painters, and were developed at the time when painted decoration came to its full bloom. We need not doubt that Pheidias owed them, at least in great part, to his unusual familiarity with all the fine arts. Of the tradition that Pheidias worked under Polygnotos, and the conjecture that he even had had a share with him in the wall-paintings which were his chief works, M. Collignon says nothing; perhaps because he thinks them not worth notice. But it is difficult not to see a painter's facility in the design of the Parthenon frieze, as indeed he remarks. But it was the distinction of the art of Pheidias's day, of Pheidias himself we may believe, that to its power of invention and combination, to its technical mastery at all points, it added the highest ethical qualities of art, if I may call them so,—majesty, purity, and with them exquisite gracefulness, and to all these, in spite of the unsurpassed affluence of its motives, a noble reserve, shown in the exclusion of detail that is not so controlled and ordered as to seem indispensable. It is this just balance of all the high qualities of art, elsewhere unreconciled, that gives the sculpture of the Parthenon its superiority to all the other sculpture that we know. If there was excess in any direction—and it is difficult to conceive of any vigorous human product without excess of some kind—it was probably in the direction of that sumptuous magnificence which has disappeared from our eyes, and in its disappearance has left the work of the Periklean age to our sight as unblemished as it belongs to human work to be.

With the vexed controversies concerning the identification of the subjects in the Parthenon sculptures M. Collignon's book does not much concern itself. Such discussions are too long to be brought into an essay of a hundred and twenty-five pages. If this leads the author to give the theories which he accepts with an air of assurance that is a little out of keeping with the judicial tone of the book, it is not with any disagreeable positiveness, but is obviously the result of conciseness. The arguments of Professor Brunn and Dr. Waldstein do not convince M. Collignon. The best-known figure of the eastern pediment, interpreted by them as Olympos, but popularly called Theseus, he prefers to consider Herakles. For the group of female figures on the right of the same pediment,—which have been the subject of endless conjecture, but most commonly spoken of as the Fates, two of them lately christened with plausibility by Dr. Waldstein as Thalassa and Gaia,—he offers a new conjecture, calling them

the three Attic Charites; and they are, as will be seen by the extract above quoted, among the few figures which he inclines to ascribe to the chisel of Pheidias himself. As the subject of the Cella-frieze, he accepts without question the Panathenaic procession, and the prevailing personations of the chief figures. Eschewing all controversy, M. Collignon confines himself mostly to what may be considered as known or generally accepted in the way of archæological comment. His artistic criticism is judicious, appreciative, and interesting, without assuming to penetrate the inner regions of the artist's mind, as much of the German criticism of the day attempts, and is on that account the more satisfactory.

Naturally, the sculptures of the Parthenon, and the stories of the Parthenos and of the Zeus at Olympia, occupy the most of Collignon's attention. The residuary account of Pheidias's latest career, and various traditions about him, are condensed into a part of the final chapter. The story of his prosecution and death given by Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus is rejected as antecedently improbable; the contradictory one quoted by the scholiast on Aristophanes from Philochoros is corrected by an emendation of Müller-Strübing, at cost of more ingenuity perhaps than the narrator deserves, and the conclusion reached, really by à priori reasoning, that Pheidias went acquitted to Elis, and died there in honor; a conclusion which on the whole answers as well as any to the conditions of a question on which we can hardly feel any assurance unless new testimony shall be discovered. A good estimate of the qualities of the Pheidian sculpture, and a fair statement of what may be inferred as to Pheidias's following and influence, close this essay, which may be summed up as clear, well arranged, interesting and eminently reasonable.

W. P. P. LONGFELLOW.

DICIONNAIRE DES FONDEURS, CISELEURS, MODELEURS EN BRONZE ET DOREURS, depuis le moyen-âge jusqu'à l'époque actuelle, par A. DE CHAMPEAUX, Inspecteur des Beaux-Arts à la Préfecture de la Seine. A-C. 12mo, pp. 357. Paris, J. Rouam; London, G. Wood & Co., 1886. [GUIDES DU COLLECTIONNEUR].

This work is the third of the series of the *Guides du Collectionneur*. It is to contain the names and works of all artists in metal from the earliest Middle Ages, a work greatly needed. The present thick volume is but a first instalment, covering only the first three letters of the alphabet. A detailed and critical review would therefore be out of place and must be deferred until the entire series is published: but we wish at present to call the attention of archæologists and of students of art to the great merit and usefulness of the work, which are already evident, and to the ency-